



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### **Bicycle Safety Month Observed in May**

BISMARCK, N.D. – May is Bicycle Safety Month and a good time for parents to discuss bike safety with their children, according to Diana Read, Injury/Violence Program coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health.

According to the North Dakota Department of Transportation, there were 83 bicycle-related injuries statewide in 2006. Each year, more than 100 American children die from bicycle-related injuries, and more than a quarter million are treated in emergency rooms nationwide. Of these, nearly half (47 percent) have traumatic brain injuries.

“National Bicycle Safety Month is the perfect time to remind all bicycle riders – and especially children – that the first and most important step in bicycle safety is wearing a helmet and wearing it correctly,” said State Health Officer Terry Dwelle, M.D. “Because we know helmets are the single most effective thing people can do to avoid injuries and deaths, everyone must make wearing a helmet a priority.”

To encourage helmet use among children, parents and caregivers can start by discussing the importance of using a safe bike and riding safely. Explain to youngsters the different parts of a bike and how to do a safety check before riding. Help youngsters understand that, like a car or truck, a bicycle is a vehicle and must obey traffic laws. Encourage children to become responsible for their own safety on and around bicycles.

“Research shows that properly worn bike helmets can reduce the risk of serious head and brain injury by as much as 85 percent,” Read said. “Modeling helmet use as an adult and starting the helmet habit with children at an early age increases their chances of wearing a helmet when they are older. Begin when children are riding tricycles and continue when they ride bicycles.”

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Because getting children to wear helmets is not always an easy task, the North Dakota Department of Health offers the following tips:

- Explain to your child why a helmet is important.
- Always insist your child wears a helmet. Make it the rule – “no helmet, no ride.” Remind your child that anyone can get hurt anywhere at any time.
- Let your child help pick out the helmet, making sure it complies with Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.
- Make sure the helmet fits correctly. Get professional advice about adjusting the helmet to your child’s head. A helmet that does not fit properly most likely won’t be worn.
- Help your child practice putting on the helmet until they are able to buckle the straps easily.
- Praise your child each time he or she wears a helmet.
- Encourage others in your environment to buy helmets for their children. Make it a neighborhood project.
- Remember that a helmet is meant to withstand one crash – after that it should be replaced.

For more information about bike safety and how to fit a bike helmet correctly, contact Diana Read, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2286 (press 1).

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